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The Center OC to honor Rich Cook

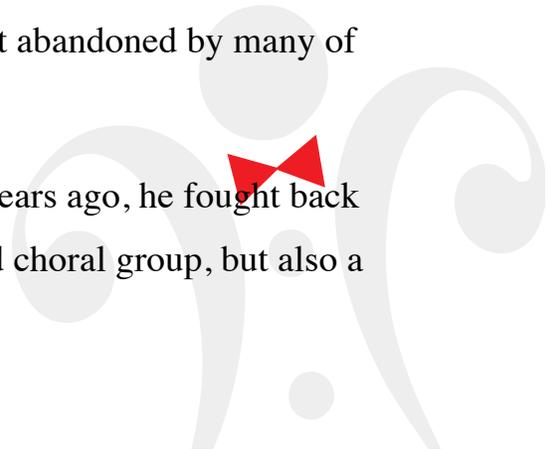
SANTA ANA, CA — Rich Cook, long-time LGBT rights activist and founder of MenAlive, Orange County Gay Men’s Chorus, will be honored for his many contributions to the LGBT community by The Center OC, an LGBT advocacy organization.

Cook, who is retiring from his post as director of the chorus at the end of its 2014 season, will receive a Torchbearer Award at The Center’s Indigo Ball, Saturday, April 26, at the Lyon Air Museum in Santa Ana.

“Rich has been a leader in shining a positive light on Orange County LGBTs,” said Kevin O’Grady, Executive Director of The Center OC. “His brainchild, MenAlive, will be a lasting legacy showing how music can break down societal barriers.”

For many years, Cook was a prominent figure in the Christian/Gospel music world, serving as musical director/artistic director for several large Christian ministries. After being outed, he was fired from his position and felt abandoned by many of his religious friends.

“Rich refused to be a victim,” says O’Grady “Thirteen years ago, he fought back by founding MenAlive, establishing not only a respected choral group, but also a community of acceptance.”





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MenAlive, Orange County Gay Men's Chorus, started with 13 music-loving members, and has grown to include more than 150 men and 50 volunteers. Its mission: "Through music, men's voices unite as a vehicle to entertain, educate, bring healing, joy, community and build bridges to the public at large"

For information about the Indigo Ball, go to http://thecenteroc.org/events_gala.php.

About Rich Cook

Rich brought his musical passion and skills to the Christian/Gospel field for years, working with Pat Robertson's Political Rallies, Trinity Broadcasting (TBN), and Melodyland in Anaheim, California.

After being outed, and despite well-intentioned warnings that conservative Orange County would never support a gay men's chorus, Rich took a leap of faith and started MenAlive in 2001. Since then, his group has not only enriched the Orange County cultural scene but also encouraged gay men to step out of the closet and onto the stage.

Rich is the proud father of three daughters, Jodi, Jeni and Julianne as well as three grandsons, Gabriel, Benjamin and Preston. He has long made Orange County his home, and resides with his partner, Chris Macaluso, in Aliso Viejo.

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